

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claims 1-18 as follows:

as Sub B1 > 1. (Amended) [Method] A method for manufacturing a coherent, robust piece of meat from smaller pieces of meat, [wherein the] comprising the steps of treating smaller pieces of meat [are treated] with one or more edible salts in order to form
5 a layer with solubilized proteins on the surface of the smaller pieces of meat [and wherein] , holding the pieces of meat [are held] against each other to form the coherent piece of meat, [characterized in that] and selectively denaturing and coagulating the solubilized proteins [are selectively denatured and coagulated]
10 such that the smaller pieces of meat are mutually joined but themselves substantially retain the properties of unprocessed raw meat because proteins present in the smaller pieces of meat substantially do not denature.

2. (Amended) ~~[Method as claimed in]~~ The method of claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the denaturation of the solubilized proteins is brought about by causing a pH decrease between the smaller pieces of meat.

C 3. (Amended) [Method as claimed in] The method of claim ¹2, [characterized in that] wherein at least on ^{interfaces} ~~the interface~~ between the smaller pieces of meat and the layer with solubilized proteins a temporary pH decrease is brought about of 0.5 to 3[,
5 preferably 0.75 to 3, more preferably 1 to 2].

sub c1
B
4. (Amended) [Method as claimed in] The method of
claim 2 [or 3, characterized in that] , wherein the pH decrease is
obtained by adding an additive causing a delayed acidification in
a quantity such that the pH value decreases ~~considerably~~ in the
5 layer with solubilized proteins, while the resulting final pH
decrease in the pieces [and/or portions] of meat is insufficient
to affect the taste.

5
5. (Amended) [Method as claimed in claims 1-4,
characterized in that] The method of claim 1, wherein the
denaturation is brought about by means of a heat treatment at a
temperature [lying] between 40 °C and 95 °C[, preferably between
5 45 °C and 75 °C and more preferably between 50 °C and 65 °C].

6. (Amended) [Method as claimed in] The method of
claim 5, [characterized in that] wherein the temperature increase
for the purpose of denaturation during the heat treatment amounts
to 0.1 to 50°C/sec. for the applicable [upward and downward]
5 temperature range.

7. (Amended) [Method as claimed in any of the
foregoing claims, characterized in that] The method of claim 1,
wherein the solubilized proteins are formed on the surface of the
smaller pieces of meat by treating them with one or more suitable
5 salts by massaging and/or tumbling.

C 8. (Amended) [Method as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that] The method of claim 7, wherein the ^{tumbling} treatment of the smaller pieces of meat with one or more suitable salts takes place in a rotating drum.

9. (Amended) [Method as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, characterized in that] The method of claim 1, wherein the solubilized proteins are at least partially formed by preparing a forcemeat from finely reduced meat with water and one
5 or more suitable salts which is mixed with the smaller pieces of meat.

AS 10. (Amended) [Method as claimed in] The method of claim 9, [characterized in that] wherein the smaller pieces of meat are slightly salted prior to addition of the forcemeat.

11. (Amended) [Method as claimed in] The method of claim 9, [characterized in that] wherein the relatively smaller pieces of meat are massaged with one or more suitable salts prior to addition of the forcemeat.

C 12. (Amended) [Method as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, characterized in that] The method of claim 1, wherein ^{sodium chloride} common salt is used for solubilizing proteins.

13. (Amended) [Method as claimed in any of the claims 5-12, characterized in that] The method of claim 5, wherein after the heat treatment a forced cooling is applied until the meat has reached a temperature lower than about 45°C.

14. (Amended) [Method as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, characterized in that] The method of claim 1, wherein the meat is held in a [mould or] container at least during the selective denaturation and the coagulation.

15. (Amended) [Method as claimed in] The method of claim 14, [characterized in that] wherein the meat is held under pressure in a [mould or] container.

16. (Amended) [Method as claimed in] The method of claim 14 [or 15, characterized in that] , wherein the meat is arranged in a vacuum bag which is placed in the [mould or] container.

Sub C2
17. (Amended) [Method as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, characterized in that] The method of claim 1, wherein meat reduced in size is used as a starting material and the denaturation and coagulation [process] is performed while the meat is held in a thin layer under light pressure to form a product with the texture of thinly cut red meat.

Sub B2
18. (Amended) [Coherent] A coherent piece of meat formed from smaller pieces of raw meat joined by a denatured and coagulated solubilized protein.

→ Add new claims 19-22 as follows: →

Sub C3
--19. The method of claim 2, wherein at least on the interface between the smaller pieces of meat and the layer with solubilized proteins a temporary pH decrease is brought about of 0.75 to 3.